

RUTLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Quarterly

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Rutland Historical Society

Editor: F. P. ELWERT.

The Rutland Historical Society publishes the *Quarterly* for its members in the interests of preserving and studying the history of the Rutland community which comprises the towns of West Rutland, Proctor, Rutland and the City of Rutland. The Society maintains and operates a museum at 101 Center Street in a building owned by the City of Rutland.

Membership in the Society is open to all. Dues, payable annually, are: Regular membership—\$2.00; Contributing membership—\$10.00.

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OUR COVER

Through the courtesy of the Rutland Free Library we publish for the first time a photo of a drastic fire Friday, May 8, 1857 which changed the look of West Street. Compare with the photo of the same section of West Street as shown on page nine of Davison's *Historical Rutland* (the date on the caption has been transposed—it should read 1853, instead of 1835). All that remains of the American House—a hotel—is the chimney. This fire spared three magnificent buildings which were to succumb later to economic pressures. They are, from the right, the Cyrus Porter brick house, the gambrel-roofed State House and the hipped-roof Jenkins-Brown-Ross house. In the distance can be seen the cupola of the Methodist Church.

In the immediate left foreground is what appears to be a Liberty Pole. If so, it stood less than one hundred feet south of where one now stands. The handsome Federal period building is a harness shop. For a view of an intermediate stage when the building housed a clothing factory see page 15.

This picture tells the observant person many things and raises questions for the curious. Note, for example, the blankets lying on the roofs of the saved buildings. When water is scarce or, what is more important, when it has to be pumped by hand or lugged up a ladder in a bucket, a way has to be found to overcome the natural tendency of water to run off a roof. Hence the blankets which helped retain water.

Note also the piles of window sash at the corners of the fences. The stoves scattered along West Street and in the park were salvaged from the neighboring Staley's stove and tin shop.



Ambrose Lincoln Brown. Lawyer, deacon, paper maker, bookseller, town clerk, judge of probate, legislator, county judge, editor of Herald.

RESEARCH IN LOCAL HISTORY

Interest in the history of the Rutland communities is unusually keen this year because of the bicentennial of our country's independence. We anticipate this interest will continue through 1977 because of the bicentennial of the founding of Vermont as an independent state. As an aid to students and the interested citizen a brief, general outline of local and state sources of research material follows.

LIBRARIES

1. The Rutland Free Library has a fine collection of Vermontiana and genealogical references in its Vermont room. All these materials must be used in the library. There is a microfilm collection of the *Rutland Herald* and census records, including Connecticut Census Records.

2. The library of the Rutland Historical Society is small but growing. The collection of Rutland directories is not complete but, through the work of volunteers, many of the older directories are indexed by streets in the same format as the newer directories. The library is rich in ephemeral material: post cards, photos, letters, miscellaneous papers. All are indexed. Scrap books include a six volume collection of births, marriages and obituaries compiled by Nellie Dunklee Beebe over a sixty year period, also indexed. Other scrap books have been compiled on the Patch-Wegner Company, the Rutland Band and the Battle of Bennington. The Society always welcomes source material relating to Rutland, especially Julia C. R. Dorr, the Ripley family, Lemuel Haynes, Joseph Bowker, John A. Graham, the Mead family—in short, any material about the Rutland area.

3. The library of the College of St. Joseph the Provider has a small collection of Vermontiana notable for the four-volume *Documentary History of New York*. Volume four is a fine source of material pertaining to the Vermont-New York land controversy. The College's microfilm collection includes Massachusetts Tax Lists of 1773 and numerous newspapers including the *Connecticut Courant* from 1773 through 1783.

4. The Special Collections of the Bailey Library at the University of Vermont is a rich source of photos, maps and directories, particularly of the Burlington area.

5. The Vermont Historical Society Library and the Bennington Museum Library share the distinction of having the two finest genealogical collections in northern New England. Of special local interest at Vermont Historical Society are the papers and account books of Ambrose Lincoln Brown, Rutland surveyor and lawyer.

PUBLIC RECORDS

1. Rutland City Clerk's Office contains records of all land transactions of the original town of Rutland (the present day towns of West Rutland, Proctor and Rutland and the City of Rutland) before 1892. After that date (when Rutland City was separated from the town and incorporated as a city) only land transactions within the corporate limits of the City are filed here. All records in the other towns—West Rutland, Proctor and Rutland Town—date from 1892. Minutes of town meetings, vital statistics and other records are also in the City Clerk's vault.

2. Rutland District Probate Court records are on file in the County Court House. Wills and other papers relating to estates and trusts are filed here.

3. Rutland County Clerk's Office is also in the County Court House. Here are records of the various courts which sat in Rutland, including early Supreme Courts, Chancery Courts and County Court. Some early land transactions are also on file. Court papers prior to 1820 are presently being indexed by special subject and name. Also in the vaults are bound newspapers published in the county before 1930, papers of the former West Rutland Trust Company, the Rutland and Burlington Railroad bankruptcy proceedings and the voluminous papers and account books of William Barnes, the marble industry pioneer.

STANDARD REFERENCE WORKS

There is no definitive history of Rutland. Almost one-half of the *History of Rutland County* by Smith and Rann (Syracuse 1886) is devoted to the original town of Rutland. An index to this 959 page work is being prepared by Rutland Historical Society volunteers for publication in 1977. F. E. Davison's *Historical Rutland* (Rutland, 1911) is a fragile but valuable compendium of facts and photos of Rutland City. Mason A. Green in the *Herald's* Special Supplement, December 8, 1894, tells in an interesting yet scholarly fashion the social and commercial life of the community during the first hundred years of the *Rutland Herald*. *Centennial Celebration of the Settlement of Rutland 1870* by Chauncey K. Williams (Rutland 1870) is a compilation of speeches and essays on early Rutland history and was reprinted in Abby Hemenway's *Gazeteer*.

JAMES S. DAVIDSON



*Fremont and Dorothy Ross at pump in
northeast corner of Main Street Park.
Great grandchildren of A. L. Brown.*

Brown-Ross Album



*James Brown. Surveyor and fireman.
Practical joker.*

"Bert" Ross - weather reporter



The handsome, imposing Federal period building at the left of our cover is shown above as it was in 1901. Gone is the bossed circle on the gable end; torn out was the Palladian window on the second floor. Removed are two of the chimneys and the twelve over twelve windows. The hull of this building remains today as part of the Olney apartments.

Note: It was the intention of your editor to publish as a combined spring-summer issue of the *Quarterly* 32 pages of a guide to interesting buildings in the Rutland communities. Such a wealth of material has been unearthed that it was though advisable to defer publication of the guide until the Fall 1976 issue.

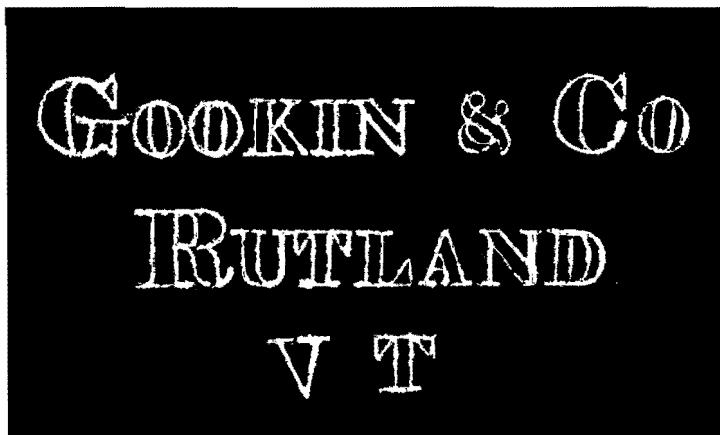
In connection with the Fall Bicentennial Week observances the Society will sponsor several conducted walking tours of the old Rutland village. The dates are: Thursday and Friday October 8 and 9 at 5 P.M. and Saturday and Sunday October 10 and 11 at 1 P.M. The tours will begin at the Museum, 101 Center Street and the Museum will be open on these days.

The Society has received since its organization many gifts from members and non-members alike. A list of donors during the period July 1975 to June 1976 is printed in the annual report which will be sent to all members.

Special thanks to the Rev. Patrick T. Hannon for a bound two-volume history of St. Peter Church which Father Hannon compiled. To Raymond A. Hughes, longtime member and secretary of the Rutland City Band, go thanks for several large scrap books of the City Band, photographs and books.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY

The annual election and business meeting of the Society will take place Wednesday October 6, 1976 in the downstairs hearing room of the Rutland County Court House at 7:30 P.M. Dean Fausett of Dorset will speak on Vermont Revolutionary History and will exhibit some of his paintings.



From Thomas L. Gravell of Wilmington, Delaware comes evidence that the paper mill at the Center Rutland falls was in operation even before 1820. Mr. Gravell sent us a copy of a letter dated Boston 1820 with a watermark that is reproduced here. Mr. Gravell is researching the early history of American papermaking and if anyone would like to pour over the Rutland Herald from 1818 to 1825 it is likely information of this early mill would be found.

Question. What was Rutland paper doing in Boston in 1820?

We are building a fund for the future—now. Support the Society; help it meet its needs. Contribute to the Building Fund.

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